

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 08870 131806Z
ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 8870

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, IS, LE
SUBJECT: APPROACH TO ISRAELIS ON ARMS SHIPMENTS TO LEBANESE
CHRISTIANS

REF: STATE 176237

1. INASMUCH AS MINISTER WEIZMAN DEPARTED FOR AUSTRIA EARLIER
TODAY I HAD COL WILLIAMS (ARMA) CONVEY THE INSTRUCTIONS
OF REFTEL TO DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, GENERAL GAZIT
LATE THIS AFTERNOON (JULY 13).

2. WILLIAMS READ THE POINTS OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF REFTEL TO
GAZIT, WHO ACCEPTED THEM BY STATING HE WOULD
IMMEDIATELY CONVEY THEM TO APPROPRIATE SUPERIORS. HE SAID
HE COULD NOT OFFICIALLY RESPOND ON BEHALF OF HIS GOVERNMENT
AT THIS TIME TO ALL THE POINTS BUT COULD AND WOULD GIVE
AN IMMEDIATE AND COMPLETE ASSURANCE THAT NO WEAPONS
OR AMMUNITION OF US ORIGIN ARE BEING DELIVERED TO THE
CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON, NORTH OR SOUTH, BY THE GOI.

3. GAZIT THEN GAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS, QUALIFYING
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THEM AS BEING "PERSONAL REMARKS AT PRESENT." HE SAID THAT
THE REPORTS OF MAJOR DELIVERIES WHICH WE REFERRED TO
IN REFTEL ARE "TREMENDOUSLY EXAGGERATED." HE SAID THAT THE
ACTUAL DELIVERIES, PRIMARILY AMMUNITION, ARE "MUCH, MUCH
BELOW THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION TAKING INTO
ACCOUNT THAT NO OTHER SOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE
CHRISTIANS." HE SAID THAT THE CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN "SHOOTING

LIKE CRAZY" WITH HIGH EXPENDITURES AND THAT HE BELIEVES THE RESUPPLY IS WELL BELOW ANY BOUNDS WHICH MIGHT BE ARRIVED AT.

4. GAZIT INDICATED THAT THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT REMAINS RELATIVELY CALM TODAY ALTHOUGH IT MAY BLOW UP AT ANY MINUTE. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A SHORT LECTURE, THE THEME BEING THAT ONE CANNOT TALK ONLY ABOUT RESUPPLY TO CHRISTIANS WHEN THE CHRISTIANS SEE A HUNDRED ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY PIECES, TWO COMMANDO BATTALIONS, MECHANIZED BATTALIONS, ETC. REINFORCING THE SYRIANS. "ARE THE CHRISTIANS SIMPLY TO SURRENDER AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE END OF THE CRUSADER PERIOD SOME 900 YEARS AFTER ITS ADVENT" WILLIAMS ASSURED GAZIT THAT THE USG IS DOING ALL IT CAN IN MANY CAPITALS AROUND THE WORLD IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION AND MAINTAIN THE CEASEFIRE AND THAT THIS MEETING TODAY WAS JUST ONE OF SUCH ATTEMPTS.

5. GAZIT RIDICULED THE IDEA OF SUPPLY OF TANKS TO THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS AND INDICATED THAT ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS THE IDF IS HAVING IN SUPPLYING THE CHRISTIANS IS THE NON-US ORIGIN RULE. HE PROMISED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESPONSES AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

6. IN PARALLEL DEMARCHE DCM PHONED EVRON AND REVIEWED
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POINTS CONTAINED PARA 3 REFTEL. EVRON SAID HE HAD RECEIVED BAR-ON'S REPORT OF CONVERSATION WITH VELIOTES AND THAT HE INTENDED TO DISCUSS IT LATER TODAY WITH DAYAN. HE NOTED THAT BAR-ON'S REPORT HAD NOT RAISED ISSUE OF WHETHER GOI HAD RECENTLY TRANSFERRED ANY US-ORIGIN WEAPONS TO LEBANON. DCM REITERATED OUR NEED FOR CONFIRMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THAT SUCH TRANSFERS HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE. EVRON ASKED IF THIS WAS A FORMAL REQUEST FROM WASHINGTON. DCM SAID IT WAS.

7. TO UNDERScore OUR CONCERN I ALSO TELEPHONED PRIME MINISTER BEGIN EARLY THIS EVENING TO EMPHASIZE OUR CONVICTION THAT IT WOULD BE SERIOUS MISTAKE FOR ISRAEL TO PROVIDE CHRISTIANS WITH EAVY EQUIPMENT SUCH AS TANKS, ROCKETS, ETC. WHICH COULD ENCOURAGE IRRATIONAL MILITANT CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS TO PROVOKE SYRIANS. I SAID I PLANNED TO SPEAK TO WEIZMAN IN MORE DETAIL AS SOON AS HE RETURNED. BEGIN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD COMPLETELY AND SHARED OUR VIEW ON THIS POINT. SAID HE WOULD SPEAK FURTHER TOMORROW MORNING TO CHIEF OF STAFF ABOUT THE QUESTION AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH DURING THE DAY ON FRIDAY. HE

VOLUNTEERED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD GIVEN FIRM
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE IDF TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT NO
WEAPONS WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE CHRISTIANS "WHICH
WOULD GIVE THE U.S. TROUBLE," BY WHICH HE WAS
ACKNOWLEDGING THE RESTRICTION ON TRANSFER OF U.S.
ORIGIN WEAPONS.
LEWIS

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